



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NATIONAL CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20460

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

November 25, 2015

Mr. Charles Grizzle
Chairman
Arsenic Science Task Force (ASTF)
Suite 300
1701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Grizzle,

Thank you for your October 09, 2014, letter outlining the concerns of your organizations regarding the development of the inorganic arsenic assessment by the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) Program. EPA welcomes your comments as we continue to evolve the IRIS Program into an organization that meets the needs of its many stakeholders.

I am glad to directly address concerns that you highlighted regarding the development of the arsenic assessment. The IRIS Program is committed to public engagement and discussion regarding the science underlying the development of the draft assessment. To date, the IRIS Program has hosted a public Scoping and Planning Meeting (January 2013) and a Public Science Meeting (June 2014) to discuss the Assessment Development Plan (ADP), literature search product, risk of bias evaluations, evidence tables, and qualitative mode of action hypothesis summaries. Additionally, the IRIS Program has extended the invitation for stakeholders to suggest science topics and present webinars on information that EPA will consider as development of the assessment moves forward. Members of your ASTF have participated and presented in the Arsenic Science Webinar Series (eight webinars to date). A separate effort from the Arsenic Science Webinar Series, anticipated when we held the June IRIS Public Science Meeting, was for the IRIS Program to hold webinars focused on key components of assessment development. These Assessment Development Webinars are under consideration and if we decide to move forward with these Webinars they will be announced on the IRIS website.

In your letter you also mention the posting of the remaining evidence tables and a cut-off date for scientific literature to be considered in the arsenic assessment. Our staff has completed an extensive literature search through July 2014. The remaining evidence tables, including any new literature that was identified, will be posted to the IRIS website in the near future. This cut-off date represents the last date at which EPA will conduct a complete literature search. As indicated in our Stopping Rules (http://www.epa.gov/iris/pdfs/IRIS_stoppingrules.pdf), it is anticipated that new studies can, in general, be included until a few months before an assessment is released to the public for review. After peer review, the presumption shifts to not including new studies unless they have an impact on the credibility of an assessment's conclusions. Accordingly, we encourage you to submit peer-reviewed manuscripts for consideration as soon as they are published.

The IRIS Program is committed to public engagement, as outlined in the enhancements announced by the Administrator in July 2013. The IRIS Program will continue to explore various approaches to stakeholder engagement and evaluate and advance our approaches based upon their effectiveness. Thank you for your continued interest in the IRIS Program.

Sincerely,

Ken Olden
Director
National Center for Environmental Assessment

cc: Vincent Cogliano
Lou D'Amico
Lynn Flowers
John Vandenberg
Debra Walsh